



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

October 2, 1996

Al Wright  
Bureau of Land Management  
2800 Cottage Way, Room E-2853  
Sacramento, CA 95825

Dear Al:

This is in follow up to our September 4 meeting with you, Carl Rountree, and Bob Beehler. We appreciate you initiating the meeting. We discussed future opportunities for BLM-EPA coordination and cooperation, the Biodiversity Council, habitat acquisitions, and the Clear Creek Management Area. The meeting was useful and productive, and I've attempted to capture the essence of our discussions. We agree that our agencies should cooperatively work together while carrying out our individual agency missions.

We discussed meeting with the State office and area offices at least annually to further our cooperative relations, and it was suggested that the U.S. Forest Service join us in these meetings. We also discussed the possibility of personnel exchange between EPA Region 9 and the BLM area offices. We look forward to receiving BLM's organization chart and a map of the area offices.

The discussions on biodiversity and land acquisition were informative. In discussing the Biodiversity Council, Carl agreed to send us a copy of the Strategic Plan and we agreed to consider attending the upcoming executive retreat on October 20 and 21.

We also appreciated the opportunity to discuss the Clear Creek Management Area (CCMA). The dialogue was informative and useful, indicating to me that more management meetings should be considered for future matters concerning the CCMA. I understand that the "technical meeting" which took place in the afternoon was quite productive as well, and like our meeting, steps were outlined to further define the "preferred alternative" and better coordinate management efforts ongoing in the Central Valley and Central Coast basins (see attached meeting minutes). In our morning session, you agreed to follow up with Ed Hastey and BLM's Budget Office regarding the \$150,000 reimbursement to EPA for past costs at the Atlas Mine Superfund Site.

As you know, for a number of years the EPA has expressed concern over the impacts that off-highway vehicle (OHV) activities are having upon the ecological resources of the CCMA and surrounding region. EPA has also expressed concern over the potential human health risks resulting from such impacts. EPA formally identified these concerns to BLM upon review of the preliminary Draft EIS in June, 1993, and again during the Draft EIS comment period in February, 1994. While the Final EIS "preferred alternative" addressed some of the EPA concerns, other components of the plan continued to raise serious questions, prompting EPA to formally protest the Final EIS request that the BLM delay its Record Of Decision (ROD) until detailed responses are prepared on the issues raised.

We were therefore pleased to learn that a process has been outlined for further incorporating the concerns of 'protesters' into the Final EIS preferred alternative and ROD. Bob Beehler said he would send us a copy of BLM's protest procedures for our reference. Mr. Beehler stated that the Hollister Resource Area will: (1) Conduct individual interviews with the 14 entities which have protested the Final EIS; and (2) facilitate a large meeting for all interested parties. Mr. Beehler stated that the purpose of the facilitated meeting is to gain consensus (*to the extent possible*) on the preferred alternative. He also informed us that approximately six months will be necessary for these meetings, and that the signing of the ROD should take place within the next year. Also at the technical meeting in the afternoon an agreement was reached that a comprehensive water quality and air quality meeting(s) should be conducted within the near future, and that breaking these two media into separate groups was a good idea as each involves a different set of issues, standards and interested parties. It was agreed that lack of coordination over pressing water quality issues suggests that a water quality meeting should be held in the next 6 weeks. It was tentatively agreed to that the Hollister Resource Area would host the meeting.

Mr. Beehler suggested that the Technical Review Team (TRT) continue to be the official forum for future discussions as this is the established advisory council for CCMA activities. Mr. Beehler noted that the TRT has a diverse constituency, including OHV users and the Sierra Club, which meets approximately quarterly. Mr. Beehler was concerned that EPA had not been attending these meetings, but review of his records indicated that communications regarding these scheduled meetings has not been consistent. We agreed to attend future meetings of which we are notified. As we indicated during the meeting, we completely support the TRT as the official advisory council for the CCMA. As suggested during the meeting, we encourage you to invite the Central Valley and Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Boards given their increasing concern over the quality of waters draining the CCMA.

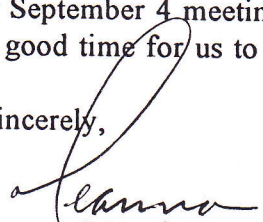
We were pleased to learn Mr. Beehler's viewpoint that CCMA activities should be coordinated with other watershed efforts in the area, most notably with the Pajaro Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) effort. EPA staff assigned to Central Coast water issues is Cheryl McGovern. Cheryl would be pleased to assist with coordination activities. We also suggest that CCMA activities should be coordinated to the fullest extent possible with the Panoche/Silver Creek and the Los Gatos/Arroyo Pasajaro watershed efforts on the east side. As you know, sub-basins within the CCMA drain into these important watersheds. In fact, these sub-basins form their head waters, and thus activities within the CCMA almost certainly



impact the hydrology of these lower watersheds. The Panoche-Silver Creek and Los Gatos watershed efforts are both in the process of developing management plans, which incorporate such elements as site assessments, land treatment and monitoring. There is perhaps a good chance for "piggyback" activities. If nothing else, information exchange would be a valuable endeavor. Tim Hatten is the EPA staff person assigned to these watersheds. Cheryl can be reached at (415) 744-2013, and Tim can be reached at (415) 744-1983.

I hope this accurately summarizes our September 4 meeting. Please let me know if I've missed anything and when it would be a good time for us to discuss next steps.

Sincerely,



Deanna M. Wieman, Deputy Director  
Cross-Media Division

Attachment

cc: Meeting Attendees